WALID who took pure science subjects in secondary school, albeit doing well, he eventually took a detour away from the discipline and into the world of arts, specifically into theatre and performance.

“I thought Science was my forte, but it is not. I felt it when I finished my Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) that is not the thing that I wanted to do,” he continued, “I decided against other courses but art, because I want to do something I feel that is worth my time, I want to do something that is going to lead me somewhere.”

He soon revealed that his inner passion was to share creative ideas. “The thing that I find very interesting about myself, is that I have a lot of ideas to share with people, and then if they love it very much, hence why when I work with theatre companies, most of the work is usually on ideas.”

The man who is a true figure in the right circle is known as the performance maker in theatre productions, he said despite the role not being familiar among the theatre scene in Malaysia, that role is a job he enjoys the most.

“A performance maker is the one who will find ideas for the performance, usually we will share ideas, check the artistic value of the performance, and if find an idea he is the being, I will see if it is boring and tries to fix it.”

Wadl also clarifies that a performance maker is not the one who decides whether an idea is a go, neither is he acting as the advisor or producer, that role is gradual.

Other than sharing his ideas on a project, he also leads and coordinate the actual musicians and artists to turn his ideas to reality. He is an artistic director Walid also complemented those productions artistically as an artistic director.

According to him the role of an artistic director to control the artistic side and the appearance of the performance, “And it is quite different from a theatre director where they control the concept, an artistic director controls the visual on stage which for me, is quite an interesting role to do.”

Walid Ali who is now a lecturer under the Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts in University Malaya Sarawak (UNIMAS) shared his daily routine as a lecturer, and at times during production commencement.

“When there is no production, my usual daily routine would be to wake up at 5am, depending on the weather I would run. Then go to work around 8am, or 10am depending on what I have on that morning.”

He continued with a serious look on his face, “The most interesting part about my daily life is when I get to go home in the evening,” a statement he mentioned which break the seriousness down.

The party of his life is during the commencement of a production, where he admitted his packed schedule turns his life into quite hectic.

Shaping his last production was held in December 2017, he revealed his daily routine then, “During those times, my day would be hectic because I have to balance my work and production time. My daily routine would be the same, but after that I would work on the production with the cast during the weekdays from 8am to 10pm.”

He mentioned also, “I would have rehearsals on Sundays from 10am to 1pm, as Saturday was our rest day. And it usually goes on for about three months.”

“The biggest challenge,” he let an insight was that most of his productions are done not based on the coursework, hence the time between 8am and 10pm cannot be disturbed.

His most meaningful production was “How to read my map” Walid’s solo performance concept, “It was an idea of telling my story, what he has done in life, and what I am about.”

“My performance was not generated by myself in Cardiff, Edinburgh, and Spain, and was first showcased during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2017.”

On the local theatre scene

“When I pursue my Master degree in Contemporary Performance Practices in London, I learned something interesting in one class that is specifically for students to explore ideas.”

He continued, “I learnt with many performance makers out there that is why when I came back to Malaysia, sharing this kind of ideas is important because what I see are local theatre or performance is when they perform ideas, or onstage the idea is quite cliché.”

The performance maker gave an example whereby the local theatre and film scene typically generate cliché contents, input their production which usually shows scenes of families fighting over properties, or a love story which are run in secondary school, “that kind of cliché ideas that we have to break down because the idea of this creative scene is not about performing trendy topics,” he shared his sentiments.

When asked during the private interview on his opinion pertaining the theatre scene in Kuching, Walid’s problem with the theatre scene in Kuching is they do not have good practitioners, but a lot of auditions.

“We have problems when it comes to performance and it is not as developed as what we can see in Kuala Lumpur,” he said, however he commented the growing participation in art appreciation among the communities in Kuching, “The interesting thing about the art scene in Kuching is they do have a very supportive audience.”

Throwing through his creativity, he shared an advice to those who are constantly experiencing mental block, especially in the creative field. “Mental block happens when we are too high, and have a high expectation, so just use what you have and enhance the special quality.”

He added also, “We are only human, we cannot do everything.”

Walid Ali is part of the Kamk Kikan Human Library as a Human Brok. Kamk Kikan Human Library isuplifting to build understanding and break stereotypes in our community. Kamk Kikan is a platform set up to counter and offer an alternative narrative to the negative narrative we see in our community about the differences that divide us - age, disabilities, ethnicity, religion, life style choices, political beliefs etc.

For more information on Kamk Kikan, visit their Facebook page at Kamk Kikan.